CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for determining a constitution of an arbitrary user of the apparatus, by the use of a computer, comprising:

rank selecting means for selecting, for each one of a plurality of items which are used for determination of the user's constitution, on the basis of data indicative of information with regard to the user himself or herself, at least one of a plurality of ranks which are used for quantitatively expressing a strength of a tendency of the user to show with regard to the each item; and

constitution displaying means for calculating, for the each item, on the basis of a selection result provided by the rank selecting means, and according to a predetermined point allocation which defines how may points are allocated to each one of the plurality of ranks when selected, a score of the each rank; for summing, for the each rank, a plurality of scores obtained by the calculating with regard to all the plurality of items, thereby determining, on the basis of a distribution pattern of a plurality of sums respectively obtained by the summing for the plurality of ranks, wherein the distribution pattern reflects how a population consisting of the plurality of sums is scattered over a range of the plurality of ranks, and according to a predetermined determination rule, the user's constitution as one of a predetermined plurality of types; and for displaying the determined constitution on a screen of the

computer.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the rank selecting means includes:

5   questions displaying means for displaying on the screen questions which are to be answered by the user, wherein the questions are constructed, such that the questions are classified into the plurality of items, and such that the questions bear the plurality of ranks for the each item; and

10   selecting means for selecting at least one of the plurality of ranks, on the basis of input data entered by the user according to contents of the questions displayed on the screen.

15   3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the data indicative of information with regard to the user himself or herself includes image data indicative of an image of at least one portion of a human body of the user, and the rank selecting means selects the at least one of the plurality of ranks, on

20   the basis of the image data, without depending on the user's answers to questions for determining his or her constitution.

4. An apparatus for determining a constitution of an arbitrary user of the apparatus, by the use of a computer,

25   comprising:

questions displaying means for displaying on a screen of the computer questions which are to be answered by the user,

wherein the questions are constructed, such that the questions are classified into a plurality of items which are used for determination of the user's constitution, and such that the questions bear, for each one of the plurality of items, a plurality of ranks which are used for quantitatively expressing a strength of a tendency of the user to show with regard to the each item, wherein at least one of the plurality of ranks is to be selected by the user for the each item; and

constitution displaying means for selecting, for the each item, on the basis of data indicative of the user's answers to the questions displayed on the screen, at least one of the plurality of ranks; for calculating, on the basis of a selection result obtained by the selecting, and according to a predetermined point allocation which defines how may points are allocated to each one of the plurality of ranks when selected, a score of the each rank; for summing, for the each rank, a plurality of scores obtained by the calculating with regard to all the plurality of items, thereby determining, on the basis of a distribution pattern of a plurality of sums respectively obtained by the summing for the plurality of ranks, wherein the distribution pattern reflects how a population consisting of the plurality of sums is scattered over a range of the plurality of ranks, and according to a predetermined determination rule, the user's constitution as one of a predetermined plurality of types; and for displaying the determined constitution on the screen.

5. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the questions displaying means displays the questions on the screen at at least two separate times, irrespective of whether or not parts of the questions which are displayed at the at least two separate times, respectively, are overlapped in content to each other; and

the constitution displaying means includes:

(a) provisionally determining means for obtaining the plurality of sums, on the basis of data indicative of the user's answers to part of the questions which is displayed at a first time on the screen by the questions displaying means; and for provisionally determining the user's constitution as at least one of the plurality of types, on the basis of the distribution pattern of the obtained plurality of sums, and according to a predetermined first determination rule; and

(b) finally determining means for finally determining the user's constitution as one of the provisionally determined at least one type, on the basis of data indicative of the user's answers to part of the questions which is displayed at a time succeeding the first time on the screen by the questions displaying means, and according to a predetermined second determination rule.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the number of the plurality of ranks is larger than that of at least one basic type among the predetermined plurality of types, which basic type is established independently of other types.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined plurality of types comprise a plurality of basic types each of which is established independently of other types; and at least one compound type obtained by compounding selected ones of the plurality of basic types, and

the constitution displaying means determines, when the distribution pattern demonstrates that the plurality of sums are distributed so as to be scattered at ones of the plurality of ranks, the user's constitution as one of the at least one compound type.

8. A method of providing a customer with a selected one of a plurality kinds of oral intakes including at least one of a food and a beverage, which selected one is compatible with the customer's constitution, comprising:

a constitution determining step of determining the customer's constitution, by operating, prior to selection from the plurality kinds of oral intakes, the apparatus defined in claim 1; and

an oral intake selecting step of selecting at least one of the plurality kinds of oral intakes which corresponds to the determined constitution, according to a predetermined selection rule.

9. A server computer which is connected through a communication network to a client computer with a screen as

used by a user, and which is operated to determine the user's constitution, comprising:

rank selecting means for selecting, for each one of a plurality of items which are used for determination of the user's constitution, on the basis of data indicative of information with regard to the user himself or herself, at least one of a plurality of ranks which are used for quantitatively expressing a strength of a tendency of the user to show with regard to the each item; and

constitution displaying means for calculating, for the each item, on the basis of a selection result provided by the rank selecting means, and according to a predetermined point allocation which defines how may points are allocated to each one of the plurality of ranks when selected, a score of the each rank; for summing, for the each rank, a plurality of scores obtained by the calculating with regard to all the plurality of items, thereby determining, on the basis of a distribution pattern of a plurality of sums respectively obtained by the summing for the plurality of ranks, wherein the distribution pattern reflects how a population consisting of the plurality of sums is scattered over a range of the plurality of ranks, and according to a predetermined determination rule, the user's constitution as one of a predetermined plurality of types; and for instructing the client computer to display the determined constitution on the screen.

10. A system for supporting, by the use of a computer

with a screen, in advising for a user of the system a proper-diet-plan suitable to the user, comprising:

the apparatus defined in claim 1;

a proper-diet-plan memory in which there has been stored a relationship between a plurality kinds of constitutions presupposed for human beings, and a plurality kinds of proper-diet-plans presupposed for human beings' diets; and

proper-diet-plan displaying means for retrieving in the proper-diet-plan memory the proper-diet-plan suitable to the user, on the basis of the constitution determined by the apparatus defined in claim 1; and for displaying the retrieved proper-diet-plan on the screen.

11. The system according to claim 10, wherein each of the plurality kinds of proper-diet-plans is defined to provide a proper diet which is suitable to the user's constitution, and which contributes to an improvement in the user's constitution toward a medium one, to the user, in the form of a recipe for practicing the proper diet.

12. A system for determining a constitution and a condition, of an arbitrary user of the system, by the use of a computer, comprising:

the apparatus defined in claim 1; and

an apparatus for determining the user's condition by the use of a computer with a screen, including:

(a) questions displaying means for displaying on the

screen questions to be answered by the user, wherein the questions are constructed so as to be classified into a plurality of items used for determining the user's condition; and

5   (b) condition displaying means for determining, on the basis of data indicative of the user's answers to the questions displayed on the screen, and according to a predetermined determination rule, the user's condition as one of a predetermined plurality of types; and for displaying the

10   determined condition on the screen.

13. A computer program to be executed by a computer for determining a constitution of an arbitrary user of the computer, by implementing a method comprising:

15   a rank selecting step of selecting, for each one of a plurality of items which are used for determination of the user's constitution, on the basis of data indicative of information with regard to the user himself or herself, at least one of a plurality of ranks which are used for quantitatively

20   expressing a strength of a tendency of the user to show with regard to the each item; and

      a constitution displaying step of calculating, for the each item, on the basis of a selection result provided by the rank selecting step, and according to a predetermined point

25   allocation which defines how may points are allocated to each one of the plurality of ranks when selected, a score of the each rank; of summing, for the each rank, a plurality of scores

obtained by the calculating with regard to all the plurality
of items, thereby determining, on the basis of a distribution
pattern of a plurality of sums respectively obtained by the
summing for the plurality of ranks, wherein the distribution

5   pattern reflects how a population consisting of the plurality
of sums is scattered over a range of the plurality of ranks,
and according to a predetermined determination rule, the user's
constitution as one of a predetermined plurality of types; and
of displaying the determined constitution on a screen of the

10 computer.

    14. A computer-readable storage medium in which the
computer program according to claim 13 has been stored.

15   15. A computer program to be executed by a computer for
determining a constitution of an arbitrary user of the computer,
by implementing a method comprising:
        a questions displaying step of displaying on a screen
of the computer questions which are to be answered by the user,

20 wherein the questions are constructed, such that the questions
are classified into a plurality of items which are used for
determination of the user's constitution, and such that the
questions bear, for each one of the plurality of items, a
plurality of ranks which are used for quantitatively expressing

25 a strength of a tendency of the user to show with regard to
the each item, wherein at least one of the plurality of ranks
is to be selected by the user for the each item; and

a constitution displaying step of selecting, for the each item, on the basis of data indicative of the user's answers to the questions displayed on the screen; of calculating, on the basis of a selection result obtained by the selecting, and according to a predetermined point allocation which defines how may points are allocated to each one of the plurality of ranks when selected, a score of the each rank; of summing, for the each rank, a plurality of scores obtained by the calculating with regard to all the plurality of items, thereby determining, on the basis of a distribution pattern of a plurality of sums respectively obtained by the summing for the plurality of ranks, wherein the distribution pattern reflects how a population consisting of the plurality of sums is scattered over a range of the plurality of ranks, and according to a predetermined determination rule, the user's constitution as one of a predetermined plurality of types; and of displaying the determined constitution on the screen.

16. A computer-readable storage medium in which the computer program according to claim 15 has been stored.